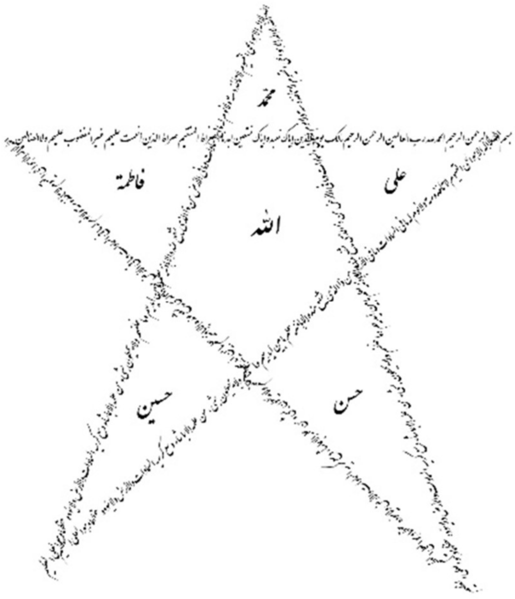
Regarding

the

Alteration of the Divine Plans

(*al-badāʾ*)


محمد
علی
فاطمة
الله
حسن
حسین

Wahid Azal

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In the Name of God the Most Powerful, the Supreme Suzerain!

> *Praise be unto God, the Suzerain of the worlds, unchanged and unalterable, Who doeth whatsoever It wills whensoever It wills in whatsoever manner It wills! And blessings and salutations be upon Its Chosen Ones from before and after; and praise be unto God, the Light of all the worlds!*

As for the matter at hand: thus saith the Camphorated Servant of the Truly Real! We say, *the alteration of the divine plan* (*al-badāʾ*) *with God is true* and *that God is not worshiped by anything like the alteration of the divine plan,*[1] *since the alteration of the divine plan is confession to the power of God to do whatsoever It wills* (**the 3rd gate of the Fourth Unity of the Persian Bayān**). [2]

First, know that a meaning to the alteration of the divine plan (*al-badāʾ*) can be glossed by the Reality of two specific verses of the **Qurʾān**: **1.** *Nothing is like unto It* **(42:11)** and **2.** *each day It is upon some* [new] *task* **(55:29)**. Next, as the Learned One (ع) highlights in a well-known *ḥadīth* recorded in Kulaynī,[3] the alteration of the divine plan can only actualize at the level of the Divine Authorization (*qaḍāʾ*) in the overall flow of Divine action in the trajectory of the **seven creative attributive** imprints, which means – just as the Divine Authorization itself – the alteration of the divine plan is that function which can occur at the level of the Divine Will (*mashīʾa*) which is the level of Absolute Existence (*wujūd muṭlaq*) wherein all the Names and Attributes arise. Thus, all such alteration occurs at the level of Divine Manifestation in the specific attributive imprint of Authorization, but not at the level of the Existence of the Truly Real (*wujūd al-ḥaqq*), the Pre-Eternal Essence, at the level of non-Manifestation Who remains as It always has been sanctified and independent of the worlds, simultaneously immune from any predicated immutability or alteration in the realities of Its creations.

And understand that to comprehend God's alteration of the divine plan is to understand the meaning behind the Learned One's (ع) saying that *there is neither predestination nor free will. Rather the matter is in between the two.*[4] Where the alteration of the divine plan is concerned, this matter is in between the two matters because at the levels of the Divine Will, Volition (*irāda*) and Determination (*qadar*) each entified and created thing is created alongside all of its trajectoral possibilities such that whether it be a thing or an event, that thing or event is generated into existentiation together with its own various possibilities and alternatives already inherent in it, whether to be one thing and not another as well as to be that thing and then the other as well simultaneously. When the *already-always* mutability of all substances in their transubstantial motion (*ḥaraka jawharīya*) is grasped as being the presential Divine inherence in them, this point is also grasped.

But this simultaneity of occurences and alternatives inherent in things in principle occurs at the level of the immutable-archetypal essences (*aʿyān al-thābita*) – that is, the quiddities (*māhīyāt*) – such that every possible trajectoral unfolding and alternative within a given creation is *already-always* known and imprinted within that thing from the *locus* of the Divine Knowledge itself, whether or not a given created thing manifests a given alteration or not in actual existence. And this matter is exceedingly fine and subtle, nor does it in any way denote duality in the Divine Knowledge since necessity, contingency and impossibility occur in the Divine Knowledge of each created thing as a single, contiguous thing, for this is the meaning by the Learned One (ع) that *verily, God has two types of knowledge* [regarding any given thing]: *a hidden, concealed knowledge that none knoweth except Itself, from which comes the alteration of the divine plan*[5] because this knowledge is at the level of the generation of the immutable-archetypal essences themselves included in which is the knowledge of their actualization and every possibility and alternative accruing to that actualization.

Be that as it may, we hold as a principial fundament to our metaphysics the complete unpredictability of the All-High at all levels of Its acts and actions such that even the science of metaphysics itself - with all of its categories, rules, contexts and subtexts – becomes nothing more than a secondary intelligible of mentally projected human cogitation with all of its limitations, since this science can only axiomatize and schematize Reality according to its own delimited understandings occuring within the duality and dualisms of human language and *languaging* located in spatiotemporality, but neither taste nor experience the Reality Itself as it truly is. This is why previously in the Bayān the Primal Point forbad its study[6] whereas in the **Completion of the Bayān** we (with the aforementioned caveat in place) have now abrogated that ordinance altogether once forbidding it, thereby now making it permissible, in one respect and from one angle to demonstrate the reality of the alteration of the divine plan itself.

Now, to take any philosophical axiomaticization or schematicization of God as being categorically veridical, is to fall into an intellectual trap of idolatry and into the abyss of a mighty veil in associating mental partners with the All-High because *nothing is like unto It* (Qurʾān 42:11). Since *nothing is like unto It*, this denotes that no act or working of God – let alone the All-High Itself – can fall into any notions of predictability in the created domain wherein the creature is able predict anything It does. In other words, creation cannot predict what God may or may not do, nor does it possess the comprehensive benchmark or categories in order to do so because creation is not God in Its totalizing comprehensiveness. This includes scripture itself, and especially the literal wording of the prophecies therein that often even become veils to Its greater will at any given moment. This is also a point that the Bayān itself repeatedly emphasizes in a variety of different ways. And so if *nothing is like unto It*, this denotes that what the creation would posit as an alteration of plans from its own vantage point is something that is *already-always* proverbially hardwired into the ontological facticity of existence itself: the complete unpredictability in God's acts and workings because to be able to predict God is to be God at that totalizing, comprehensive level, which is absurd. A Complete Human and Manifestation of God is a *locus* – however complete – but this *locus* is a vehicle of its Source and not the totalizing Source and Principle Itself Which encompasses the totality of all things beyond even that specific *locus* of Manifestation, hence one of the reasons for 'progressive revelation'. Thus even for every Complete Human and Manifestation of God the principle of *nothing is like unto It* remains firmly intact as a continually operative one, *for It doeth whatsoever It wills and decrees whatsoever It desires*! Given this perspective, therefore, truly, God cannot be worshiped in a greater way than in the alteration of the divine plans (*al-badāʾ*) because it is a confession to Its absolute Power and freedom, Its complete unpredictability in Its acts and workings, and the total dependence (*iftiqār*) of all things towards It as a consequence.

In realms of thought where scholars tread,
The axioms of God are often said!

Yet to claim these truths as whole or fixed,
Is to with idolatrous traps be mixed!

For nothing matches the Divine,
A Truth the Qurʾan does underline!

Predicting acts of the All-High,
Is folly under the endless sky!

Not even scripture, nor prophetic word,
Can cage Its Will, however heard!

For literal veils may lead astray,
From the greater Will, from the truest way!

The Bayān too, with diverse voice,
Repeats this theme, confirms the choice:

What seems a change in human eyes,
Is ordained Truth, beyond the skies!

Predict God’s will? A task absurd,
For such would mean you are the Lord!

Each Manifest, though reflection pure,
Is but a part, not the Whole’s allure!

Progressive revelation teaches us,
God’s ways unfathomed, in It we trust!

In alteration of divine decree,
We find the highest form of piety!

To acknowledge this, is to admit,
In total dependence, we must submit!

Thus worship finds its truest form,
In praising change, through every storm!

That stated, along with the principle that *nothing is like unto It* (Qurʾān 42:11) there is the fact that *each day It is upon some* [new] *task* (Qurʾān 55:29). When these two verses are meditated upon together, the Reality of the alteration of the divine plan (*al-badāʾ*) becomes glaringly obvious since this verse establishes the principle of creation at each moment (*tajdīd khalq*) such that the creation a moment ago is not the same creation at this moment nor will the creation at this moment be the creation at the next moment, and so on. Thus, from one perspective, the alteration of the divine plan (*al-badāʾ*) is a process that is ongoing at every moment, before every moment, and after every moment in the Hands of the One Who nothing is like unto. Therefore, based on this, God cannot even be properly worshiped without the Reality of the alteration of the divine plan (*al-badāʾ*) since to do so without it is to be stuck and ossified in the moment of a previous creation and Self-Disclosure. And so we say, *every moment It is upon some* [new] *task*[7] since every moment constitutes a unique Theophanic Self-Disclosure that does not repeat itself in the next such that in the moment the Presence of the Living God abides whereby in the one previous to it, for the servant, the Living God does not abide under the Name 'the Living' (الحيّ) in the *locus* of that moment which has passed, but under another Name, this showing to you the alteration in the self-disclosures of the Names from moment to moment. Yet for the servant It will again become manifest in the moment to come under the Name 'the Living' (الحيّ), and so on. But each time the Name 'the Living' (الحيّ) manifests in a given moment, it is not like Its Manifestation at a previous moment because *nothing is like unto It*, and so the servant may experience this Name differently from moment to moment, sometimes this way and sometimes that, and so on, since each moment is a new creation wherein to the true gnostic it is, as it were, like he is Adam looking upon each moment as his first creation. So from moment to moment he is being recreated anew, and each recreation is unlike the last, nor will the subsequent be like the one before it, for *each day It is upon some* [new] *task* (Qurʾān 55:29).

So understand this and worship God by the Reality of the alteration of the divine plan (*al-badāʾ*) in order to taste the self-disclosures of the moment, for *nothing is like unto It* (Qurʾān 42:11) when *each day It is upon some* [new] *task* (Qurʾān 55:29) wherein bewilderment at Its acts and workings becomes the proper etiquette towards It through which It will disclose Its mysteries to you. We will at a later time elsewhere return to this topic again.

And to God is the Path and the Destiny, seen and unseen, and by It is the Way and its culmination! There is no god but God Truly, Truly, for God is the Path of Resplendence!

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28th of ʿIshq NUR 19

19th of March 2025 CE

Notes

[1] Which itself in Persian is a verbatim citation of the Arabic wording of a *ḥadīth* attributed to the Learned One, the Sixth Imām (ع):

مَا عُبِدَ اللّٰهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِشَيْءٍ مِثْلَ الْبَدَاءِ

[2] Its wording in the same gate of the **Arabic Bayān** (which is being addressed to the Primal Point by God) is phrased as:

> لَنْ أَعْبُدَ مِثْلَ مَا تَعْبُدُنِي بِالْبَدَاءِ وَذَلِكَ ذَاتُ بَدَائِكَ فِي آخِرِيكَ وَأَوَّلِيكَ حِينَمَا تَقَلَّبْ فِي بَطْنِ أُمِّكَ لَوْ لَمْ يَتَقَلَّبْ بِمَا تَقَلَّبْ مَا أَيْقَنَ بِبَدَائِي وَإِنَّكَ وَاحِدٌ مَا خَلَقْتُ لَكَ مِنْ كُفْوٍ وَلَا عَدْلٍ وَلَا شَبْهٍ وَلَا قَرِينٍ وَلَا مِثَالٍ كَذَلِكَ أَخْلُقُ مَا أَشَاءُ وَإِنَّنِي أَنَا الْقَادِرُ الْعَلَّامُ
>
> *You will not worship like how You worship Me by the alteration of the divine plan! That is the essence of Your alteration in Your finality and Your beginning when You were turning inside Your mother's womb! Had You not turned as You did, You would not have been certain of My alteration of plan! And verily, you are Unique! I have not created for You either an equal, nor a counterpart, nor a likeness, nor a peer, nor a similitude! Thus, I create what I will, and indeed, I am the All-Powerful, the All-Knowing!* (*my trans.*)

Here a point that would trigger the criticism of the traditional Arabic grammarians is the Bāb's unconventional use of *lan* لن (future tense negation) with an imperative in the second person indicative mood. In the context of classical Arabic grammar, using لَنْ with an imperative sense would be considered unconventional or a deviation from the standard rules of grammar. Normally لَنْ is used strictly to negate future actions in the non-imperative indicative mood, and it is conventionally followed by a verb in the subjunctive mood. Its use directly before a verb typically signals that the verb is expected to convey a future action, not a command. The standard way to negate a command in Arabic is using لا followed by the jussive mood of the verb. For example, to negate the command 'write!' (أُكتُبْ), one would say لا تكتبْ (Do not write!). Using لَنْ in this imperative context doesn't align with this conventional grammatical rule. Placing أَعْبُدَ as imperative under the influence of لَنْ would normally seem out of place because أَعْبُدَ in the context of لَنْ would typically be read in the subjunctive mood as part of a statement about the future, not as an imperative command. The Primal Point's usage here would therefore represent a creative use of Arabic, which was among the issues that drove the orthodox seminary grammarians up the wall and was among their points of criticism and attack against Him.

However, besides grammar and the labyrinthine rules therein with classical Arabic, there is also a lettrist code by number encoded in the first two words of this passage by the Primal Point that seeks to convey the perpetuity of the alteration of the divine plan for all time because in this formulation لن أعبد holds a numerical value of 157 which is equivalent to the sum of هو الحقّ (He/It is the Truth/Truly Real) (= 150) plus أبد (post-eternal/post-eternity) (= 7); or بداء itself when the final *hamza*ʾ of the word not be counted wherein we can derive the phrase بداء هو الحقّ (*Badā*ʾ is the Truth). Such examples are replete throughout the writings of the Primal Point, and they effectively mute and simultaneously invalidate for all posterity the attacks and criticisms launched against the Him on the part of the biased turbans of the seminary and their followers regarding His faulty grammar.

[3] Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, H 375, ch. 24, h.16:

> *It Knew, and It Willed, and It Volited, and It Determined, and It Authorized, and It carried out. So It carried out what It Authorized, and It Authorized what It Determined, and It Determined what It Willed. Thus, by Its Knowledge came the Will, and by Its Will came the Volition, and by Its Volition came the Determination, and by Its Determination came the Authorization, and by Its Authorization came the Execution. And Knowledge precedes the Will, and the Will comes second, and the Volition comes third. Determination falls upon the Authorization with Execution. Thus, to God, Blessed and Exalted be It, belongs the prerogative of Revision/Alteration* (*al-badā*ʾ) *in what It knew whenever It Wills, and in what*

It Wills for the Determination of things. But when Authorization occurs with Execution, then there is no Revision/Alteration. For the Knowledge of the known things existed before their being, and the Will was in the originated things before their appearance, and the Volition was in the willed things before their manifestation. The Determination was for these known things before their specification and connection in time and sight. Authorization with Execution is what is finalized among the created, embodied things that are perceived by the senses—those with color, scent, weight, and measure; and whatever walks and crawls from among humans, jinn, birds, beasts, and others that are sensed through the faculties. To God, Blessed and Exalted be It, belongs the prerogative of Revision in what has no visible form. But when the visible, comprehending and perceived form comes into being, there is no Revision/Alteration. And God does what It Wills. By Knowledge, It knew things before their being, and by Will, It defined their attributes and limits, and It brought them into being before their appearance. By Volition, It distinguished their essences in their colors and attributes, and by Determination, It measured their sustenance and made known their beginnings and ends. By Authorization, It clarified their places to the people and guided them to them, and by Execution, It explained their causes and revealed their affairs. And that is the Determination of the Granderous, the All-Knowing!

عَلِمَ وَ شَاءَ وَ أَرَادَ وَ قَدَّرَ وَ قَضَى وَ أَمْضَى فَأَمْضَى مَا قَضَى وَ قَضَى مَا قَدَّرَ وَ قَدَّرَ مَا أَرَادَ فَبِعِلْمِهِ كَانَتِ الْمَشِيئَةُ وَ بِمَشِيئَتِهِ كَانَتِ الْإِرَادَةُ وَ بِإِرَادَتِهِ كَانَ التَّقْدِيرُ وَ بِتَقْدِيرِهِ كَانَ الْقَضَاءُ وَ بِقَضَائِهِ كَانَ الْإِمْضَاءُ وَ الْعِلْمُ مُتَقَدِّمٌ عَلَى الْمَشِيئَةِ وَ الْمَشِيئَةُ ثَانِيَةٌ وَ الْإِرَادَةُ ثَالِثَةٌ وَ التَّقْدِيرُ وَاقِعٌ عَلَى الْقَضَاءِ بِالْإِمْضَاءِ فَلِلّٰهِ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى الْبَدَاءُ فِيمَا عَلِمَ مَتَى شَاءَ وَ فِيمَا أَرَادَ لِتَقْدِيرِ الْأَشْيَاءِ فَإِذَا وَقَعَ الْقَضَاءُ بِالْإِمْضَاءِ فَلَا بَدَاءَ فَالْعِلْمُ فِي الْمَعْلُومِ قَبْلَ كَوْنِهِ وَ الْمَشِيئَةُ فِي الْمُنْشَإِ قَبْلَ عَيْنِهِ وَ الْإِرَادَةُ فِي الْمُرَادِ قَبْلَ قِيَامِهِ وَ التَّقْدِيرُ لِهَذِهِ الْمَعْلُومَاتِ قَبْلَ تَفْصِيلِهَا وَ تَوْصِيلِهَا عِيَاناً وَ وَقْتاً وَ الْقَضَاءُ بِالْإِمْضَاءِ هُوَ الْمُبْرَمُ مِنَ الْمَفْعُولَاتِ ذَوَاتِ الْأَجْسَامِ الْمُدْرَكَاتِ بِالْحَوَاسِّ مِنْ ذَوِي لَوْنٍ وَ رِيحٍ وَ وَزْنٍ وَ كَيْلٍ وَ مَا دَبَّ وَ دَرَجَ مِنْ إِنْسٍ وَ جِنٍّ وَ طَيْرٍ وَ سِبَاعٍ وَ غَيْرِ ذَلِكَ مِمَّا يُدْرَكُ بِالْحَوَاسِّ فَلِلّٰهِ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى فِيهِ الْبَدَاءُ مِمَّا لَا عَيْنَ لَهُ فَإِذَا وَقَعَ الْعَيْنُ الْمَفْهُومُ الْمُدْرَكُ فَلَا بَدَاءَ وَ اللّٰهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ فَبِالْعِلْمِ عَلِمَ الْأَشْيَاءَ قَبْلَ كَوْنِهَا وَ بِالْمَشِيئَةِ عَرَّفَ صِفَاتِهَا وَ حُدُودَهَا وَ أَنْشَأَهَا قَبْلَ إِظْهَارِهَا وَ بِالْإِرَادَةِ مَيَّزَ أَنْفُسَهَا فِي أَلْوَانِهَا وَ صِفَاتِهَا وَ بِالتَّقْدِيرِ قَدَّرَ أَقْوَاتَهَا وَ عَرَّفَ أَوَّلَهَا وَ آخِرَهَا وَ بِالْقَضَاءِ أَبَانَ لِلنَّاسِ أَمَاكِنَهَا وَ دَلَّهُمْ عَلَيْهَا وَ بِالْإِمْضَاءِ شَرَحَ عِلَلَهَا وَ أَبَانَ أَمْرَهَا وَ ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

[4] لا جَبْر وَلا تَفْوِيض وَلكِنْ أَمْر بَيْنَ أَمْرَيْنِ

Muḥammad Rayshahri *mīzān al-ḥikma*, vol. 1 (h.482): 363.

[5] إِنَّ لِلَّهِ عِلْمَيْنِ: عِلْمٌ مَكْنُونٌ مَخْزُونٌ لَا يَعْلَمُهُ إِلَّا هُوَ، مِنْ ذَلِكَ يَكُونُ الْبَدَاءُ

Ibid. (h.336).

[6] The 10th **gate of the Fourth Unity** of the Persian Bayān:

> و نهی شده از انشاء ما لا يَسْمُنُ وَلا يُغْنِي مِثل اصول و منطق و قواعد فقهيه و حكميه وعلم لغات غير مستعمله وَمَا يُشْبِهُ هَذَا وَمَا قَدْ فُصِّلَ فِي الصَّرْفِ وَالنَّحْوِ فَإِنَّ قَدْرَ مَا يُكْتَفَى لِلْمُتَأَدِّبِينَ مَا يَعْرِفُ الْفَاعِلَ وَالْمَفْعُولَ وَمَا دُونَهُمَا مِنْ شُئُونِهِمَا إِذْ دُونَ ذَلِكَ لَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ الْعَبْدَ إِذَا اشْتَغَلَ بِهِ

> *And it has been forbidden from publishing what does not nourish nor enrich, such as the principles of jurisprudence* (*uṣūl*), *logic* (*manṭiq*), *the rule of religious jurisprudence* (*fiqhīya*) *and metaphysics* (*ḥikamīya*), *the knowledge of dead languages, and the like, as well as what has been detailed in morphology* (*sarf*) *and syntax* (*naḥw*). *For, verily, the extent necessary for the literary educated is to know the subject, the object, and their related matters, since other than that, God will not forgive the servant if they busy himself with these!* (*my trans.*)

The underlying reasons therein by the Primal Point - not overtly expressed above - specifically where divine matters are concerned, is best summarized by a famous poem of Rūmī's in His first book of the **Masnavī**, which is as pertinent now as it was back then:

پای استدلالیان چوبین بود
پای چوبین سخت بی‌تمکین بود

The rationalists' legs are made of wood,
These wooden legs stand not as they should!

Contrary to the sentiment expressed by a famous poem of Mīr Dāmād's (d. 1631 CE) claiming to refute this poem above, neither the Primal Point nor Rūmī are necessarily criticizing 'reason' as such or engaging in any anti-intellectual polemic *per se*. Rather what they are criticizing and reacting to is the attempt by reason and socially-constructed intellectual traditions to make idols of themselves, meander into areas they are simply incapable of entering into, and thereby attempt to grasp things divine when relying exclusively on their own self-generated categories, contexts and subtexts – all secondary intelligibles without actual reality as no more than mental and intellectual projections of the mind – in order to go beyond where the mind and partial intellect can possibly go. In the immediate context of things, such intellectual idolatry and the establishments who uphold them has always invariably led to the wholesale persecution or outright physical murder of the Complete Humans based on those delusions such intellectual idolatry seems to generate. Whether it be the secular university culture of the West today or the seminary cultures of Islam (Sunnī or Shiᶜi) and elsewhere, the current spiritual barrenness with its increasing intellectual poverty in the human condition as technology advances proves that all of their sciences combined are incapable of getting anywhere and nowhere near to There, as it were; and so they are – as Rūmī also says – *bent on the side of the road* whilst others not reliant exclusively on such socially-constructed intellectual traditions have indeed traversed the proverbial seven cities of the heart! While this former ordinance of the Bayān’s has been an endless source of criticism and ridicule by its enemies, it is one however that any genuine gnostic can understand intuitively, i.e. the limits of human reason with the inability of the sciences to grasp Ultimate Truth and the Reality of things as they truly are. In his *EIr* (Encyclopedia Iranica) entry, Denis MacEoin attempted to subtly smear the Bayān *qua* Azalī Bābsim as a sort of impractical creed for a “gnostic elite” based precisely on such ordinances. It seems to us that MacEoin did not fully grasp the greater context and issues which our comments here have briefly highlighted.

كُلُّ حِينٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ[7]